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This paper examines the workforce development programs implemented at the Cumberland County Public Library. The case study focuses on the specific initiatives and evaluation methods implemented by the library for workforce development programs. Analysis indicates that the efforts and initiative of library personnel is a key factor in successful implementation and evaluation of workforce development programs in addition to in-depth research and innovative approaches to data collection. Funding plays an important but supplementary role in supporting initiatives. Finally, job fairs are key workforce development initiatives which illustrate the findings in the paper.

Headings:

Cumberland County Public Library

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A CASE STUDY OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS IN THE
CUMBERLAND COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM

by
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Introduction

The Great Recession was one of the worst financial crises since the Great Depression of 1929. The United States unemployment rate skyrocketed from 5.1 percent in March 2008 (a few months prior to the collapse of Lehman Brothers) to a high of 10 percent in October 2009 (“Civilian Unemployment Rate”, 2015). During the same period of time, the civilian employment population ratio fell from 62.7 percent to 58.5 percent (“Civilian Employment Population Ratio”, 2015). It is estimated that nearly 8.7 million jobs were lost during the Great Recession (“Employment Situation Summary”, 2015). Of the 8.7 million jobs lost, 3.2 million jobs were tied to consumer demand and were concentrated in three industries: manufacturing, professional and business services, and retail trade (“Consumer Spending and U.S. employment from the 2007-2009 recession through 2022”, 2014). After nearly seven years of expansionary monetary policy in the form of quantitative easing and zero percent interest rates, the United States appears at first glance to have successfully recovered from the financial crisis. However, the 5.1 percent unemployment rate reported as of September 2015, does not fully reflect the overall state of the economy. Real median household incomes in the United States fell from \$54,423 in 2008 to \$51,939 in 2013, which is well after the worst period of the financial crisis and has remained stagnant, failing to recover in concert with the U.S. stock market (“Real Median Household Income”, 2014). As of August 2015, there were 2.2 million people who were considered long-term unemployed

(jobless for 27 weeks or more) and accounted for 27.7 percent of the unemployed (“Employment Situation Summary”, 2015). This is alarming as the longer one stays unemployed, the more likely it is for one to lose job skills over time (skill deterioration) and to become even more unemployable in the future. Furthermore, there were 6.5 million people employed part-time for economic reasons (these are people who desire full-time employment but are working part-time because their hours were cut back or were unable to find full-time jobs) and 1.8 million people marginally attached to the labor force (those who were not in the labor force, wanted and were available for work, and had searched for a job in the past year) (“Employment Situation Summary”, 2015).

These economic indicators are significant because they highlight the fact that our economy is not experiencing typical cyclical fluctuations due to the business cycle. If that were the case, most of the key economic indicators should have increased in concert with each other during the recovery. For example, if the economy were truly recovering as per the business cycle, then we should have observed increases in per capita GDP along with increases in real median household income. Furthermore, under traditional business cycle conditions, jobs which existed prior to the Recession should have returned with the economic recovery as employers become more willing to hire employees to service increased consumer demand. Instead, many jobs have simply disappeared and have been replaced by new jobs such as those in healthcare services. For example, from 2007 to 2010, the goods-producing industry (consisting of mining, construction and manufacturing) saw a 17.7 percent decrease in the number of jobs. Instead of seeing those jobs return in the post-recession period, it is estimated that the goods-producing industry will see a one percent decrease in jobs each year from 2012 to 2022 (“Consumer

Spending and U.S. employment from the 2007-2009 recession through 2022”, 2014).

This means that our economy is currently facing a systemic shift in the labor market. The types of jobs that we are seeing are not the same jobs we had seen prior to the Great Recession. Although there are many potential factors which may result in these systemic changes to our economy, technology has had a tremendous impact on the way in which we work and interact in our modern society.

Technology such as steam power and electricity led to massive advances in innovation and economic output, essentially transforming the way people worked as well as their productivity. These types of “general purpose technologies” are innovations which interrupt and accelerate the normal rate of economic progress (Brynjolfsson, 2012, p. 5). These so-called GPTs get better themselves over time and also lead to “complementary innovations in the processes, companies and industries that make use of them” (Brynjolfsson, 2012, p. 5). Computers are our modern day GPT, continuing to transform the way in which we work and interact with each other, resulting in changes in society, education, and the economy. While computers have completely revolutionized our economic productivity, they have also created massive changes that have made it difficult for society to adapt to these transformations. Computers have previously proven to be very effective in performing repetitive tasks. However, modern-day advances in technology have shown that computers are capable of processing enormous amounts of data and gleaning valuable insights from that data, allowing computers to engage in much more advanced analyses of information and pushing the limits of knowledge discovery. The sheer pervasiveness of computers in our social lives as well as our work lives highlights how powerful and how dependent we have become on these technologies in

our daily lives. While automation and smart computing may replace certain jobs such as those in the manufacturing sector, it is more apparent that people across all industries will need to utilize and work with computers in the modern workplace and will need the skills to utilize and interact with technology in order to remain active and productive members of the modern economy.

Technology and digital literacy in our modern economy are more crucial than ever before. According to the United States Department of Commerce, American jobs related to the Internet contributed an estimated \$300 billion to U.S. GDP in 2009. In addition, 96% of working Americans use new communication technologies as part of their daily lives while 62% of working Americans use the Internet as a key part of their jobs (“Fact Sheet: Digital Literacy”, 2011). During the period between 1998 and 2008, the number of IT jobs increased by 26%, which was four times faster than U.S. employment as a whole. It is estimated that by 2018, the number of IT-related jobs will increase by 22 percent. However, while there is undoubtedly an increased need for digital literacy due to the prevalence of technology in the workplace, there is also a need for improving access to these digital technologies in the United States. For example, 28% of Americans do not use the Internet at all, while 32% lack broadband service (“Fact Sheet: Digital Literacy”, 2011). These statistics indicate that technology is transforming the way we work and interact with each other, becoming a vital factor in improving human productivity in the workplace. Not only is it important that people understand how to effectively use computers and the Internet for enhancing their work-related productivity, but that widespread access to these new technologies is an important issue in the American economy.

Understanding the growing prevalence of technology and its role in the modern workplace, public libraries across the country have taken initiatives to improve digital literacy and provide job assistance to members of their respective communities. Libraries are ideally-suited to bridge the knowledge and skills gap between people and technology. Providing free access to computers, books, reference materials as well as classes offering computer instruction, libraries have the resources as well as the breadth of scope to reach nearly every American across the country and make a positive impact. There are approximately 119,487 libraries of all kinds across the United States (“Number of Libraries in the United States”, 2015). As of 2012, there were 9,082 public libraries in the United States, with 302.6 million people living within a public library services area (accounting for 96.4 percent of the U.S. population) (“Libraries in the United States Survey Fiscal Year 2012”, 2014). Public libraries across the country also provide “workforce development” programs which are aimed at providing job-related training and services to their communities. This typically involves resume-building, basic computer literacy as well as assistance with completing online applications. According to a 2012 report by the IMLS, 30 million Americans “used a library computer to address career and employment needs in 2009, including submitting online applications, searching for job opportunities, and working on their resumes” (“Talking Points: Library/Workforce Partnerships Spur Economic Development”, 2012). Furthermore, the IMLS reported that 3.7 million library patrons reported finding work due to library services. In the state of North Carolina, there were reported estimates of 11,470 technology/computer programs and 3,945 workforce development programs offered by

libraries across the state as of June 2015 (“NC Public Library Statistical Report, Table 12 – Library Programs, Attendance and Meeting Space”, 2015).

It is evident that libraries across the country are providing programs and resources to help their communities gain the skills as well as the basic digital literacy necessary to be skilled and active members of the modern American workforce. However, some library systems have established innovative ways in providing workforce development programs for their communities. The Cumberland County Public Library System in Fayetteville, North Carolina was one of 10 winners of the 2012 National Medal for Museum and Library Service, the nation’s highest honor for libraries and museums serving their communities in exceptional ways (Greene, 2013). In particular, the Cumberland County Public Library System was recognized for its workforce development programs in offering computer access and job fairs to their local community. This paper will investigate the workforce development programs offered by the Cumberland County Public Library system, the people involved, as well as the data collection methods implemented in order to identify the key elements which make their programs and overall approach effective in regards to workforce development. It is believed that by investigating the specific case of the Cumberland County Public Library System and their workforce development programs, we will be able to obtain valuable insights into which factors are most effective when developing programs which address the workforce-related needs of their communities. Furthermore, this analysis will allow us to identify effective policies regarding workforce development programs which may be applicable to other library systems across the country. This will increase awareness of the current policies implemented in the Cumberland County Public Library System and

may assist other library systems across the country in developing effective workforce development programs of their own to better suit the specific needs of their communities. Hopefully, this will assist libraries in improving their existing programs so they can provide even more value to their communities regarding employment and skills training in this era of rapid technological change.

Literature Review

Public libraries are currently faced with demands from the public as well as the government regarding the programs and services they offer. On the one hand, libraries are pressured by their communities to provide relevant programming and services to suit their individual needs while policymakers demand that libraries provide these services with lesser funding. A key reason for this pressure is that libraries have failed to present the concrete benefits of their programs to the public to justify greater funding from policymakers (Jaeger, 2015, p. 63). Jaeger argues that rather than simply asserting that their programs help their communities without providing concrete evidence of their economic value, it is necessary for libraries to become aware of the politics and policymaking regarding funding and to effectively advocate for the role of libraries in providing clear benefits to the public such as in providing employment-related assistance to the public (Jaeger, 2015, p. 334). This is where data analysis becomes a crucial tool for libraries to effectively advocate and articulate their positions and needs (Jaeger, 2013, p. 64).

Proper evaluation is central in order for libraries to advocate for their programs and the benefits which those programs provide for their communities. Peter Hernon defines evaluation as “a process of identifying and collecting data about specific services or activities, establishing criteria by which their success can be assessed, and determining both the quality of the service or activity and the degree to which the service or activity accomplishes stated goals and objectives.” (Hernon, 1990, p. 1). Evaluation acts

primarily as a decision-making tool that assists library staff in allocating their scarce resources to the activities and services that best facilitate the goals and objectives of the library. There are two types of evaluation approaches: formative and summative. Formative approaches to evaluation consist of ongoing assessments that provide information to monitor and improve an activity or service in-progress where the primary goal is to improve said service (Hernon, 1990, p. 8). Summative evaluation methods on the other hand, focus on determining the level of program success or failure after program implementation where the primary goal is to prove the value of the service provided (Hernon, 1990, p. 8). However, one must be mindful when conducting program evaluation to distinguish between effectiveness (the extent to which a service accomplishes stated objectives) and efficiency (whether a resource allocation is appropriate) (Hernon, 1990, p. 5).

Evaluation can also be divided into internal and external approaches which aim to address different issues. Internal evaluation is ultimately for the benefit of the library and informs decision-making as well as planning by implementing a systematic process of quality review (Hernon, 2014, p. 50). External evaluation on the other hand, ultimately addresses library stakeholders and informs them of how the library adds value to patrons, other institutions as well as the community (Hernon, 2014, p. 76). For both internal and external evaluation, evidence is obtained by collecting data through a variety of methods such as comparative studies, data-mining, descriptive surveys, focus group interviews, gap analysis, program evaluations, customer feedback, librarian observation and usage data (Hernon, 2014, p. 23).

Evaluation of library programs in general is a difficult task as there are concerns regarding data collection as well as the nature of the data that is collected. In evaluating library literacy programs, most evaluation reports consist of usage figures and qualitative data from participants, which can be difficult and costly to obtain (Johnson, 1986, p. 10). Furthermore, there is no guarantee that the data retrieved from these reports are generalizable and unbiased. As a result, many library literacy programs are criticized as being expensive, ineffectual and unnecessary (Johnson, 1986, p. 14). When libraries evaluate their programs based on continued existence as the primary indicator of success, the problem of effectively articulating the benefits of these programs is exacerbated. As a result, it is crucial that program objectives are clearly outlined. Debra Johnson studied the evaluation of library literacy programs and suggested that frameworks should be used and established to clearly categorize evaluation measures (Johnson, 1986, p. 16). In addition, approaching evaluation by using the proper tools was emphasized as being a key component of successful evaluation (Johnson, 1986, p. 17). Systematic and standard evaluation are seen as keys towards providing better evaluation measures of these literacy programs.

This systematic approach towards standardizing evaluation measures is a shared approach embraced by different types of libraries for a variety of programs. In evaluating the effectiveness of clinical medical librarian programs, Kay Wagner found that through a systematic review of evidence of 30 years of literature evaluating clinical medical librarian programs, most research evaluated single, active programs and used descriptive research methods (Wagner, 2004, p. 21). As a whole, evaluation of program effectiveness in clinical medical libraries was determined to be somewhat lacking and more descriptive

in nature rather than comparative or analytically quantitative (Wagner, 2004, p. 29).

Again, standardization was a key recommendation outcome of their research.

In the realm of school libraries, evaluating library media program effectiveness in teaching information technology literacy to students found that using established standards of assured experiences in IT literacy was crucial towards improving the effectiveness of their existing programs (Snyder, 2008, p. 25). Increased collaboration on the part of instructors and librarians as well as teachers to ensure proper standards training and preparation were key aspects of proper evaluation and implementation (Snyder, 2008, p. 27).

In regards to tools to assist in the proper evaluation of library programs, Rachel Applegate outlined the importance of evaluation plans as a tool to assist libraries by providing them with a broad overview of how the organization is doing (Applegate, 2013, p. 163). Evaluation plans allow the library to demonstrate that the original need has been addressed by measuring five broad types of program outcomes. These outcomes include knowledge, skills, attitudes, behavior, as well as status and life condition (Applegate, 2013, p. 178). Applegate notes that libraries are constantly in a state of change for a multitude of reasons with multiple results. The most important benefit of good evaluation plans and reports are that they provide the ability for the library to determine the success and accomplishments of changes both before and after those changes have been implemented (Applegate, 2013, p. 188).

While standardization of existing practices is a key factor in proper evaluation of library program effectiveness, it is still difficult to establish standards regarding data collection of these programs. Therefore, while standardization is certainly a key

component of properly evaluating effectiveness, it is limited by the types of data collection as well as the presentation of that data in a concrete and quantitative format. In approaching the issue of evaluation of library programs, researchers at the University of Pennsylvania Fels Institute of Government conducted an in-depth analysis to evaluate the economic impact of the Free Public Library of Philadelphia on its community (Diamond, 2010, p. 3). This study used economic analysis to answer the question of what value the Free Library of Philadelphia creates and adds to the economic lives and futures of the users and citizens of Philadelphia. The researchers used field statistics from all Philadelphia Library branches, interviews, surveys, census and BLS data for the city of Philadelphia, as well as data from a database of Philadelphia home sales, real estate values and trends. They estimated the economic value of helping citizens obtain literacy and working skills at \$21.8 million, as well as \$6 million for workforce development programs (finding job opportunities and developing job skills) as of fiscal year 2010 (Diamond, 2010, p. 7). This study is very unique in that the researchers focused on quantitative data analysis to present concrete findings on the economic impact of the Free Library on the city of Philadelphia. The study was able to concretely demonstrate how libraries help people learn to read (literacy), help people find jobs and career opportunities (workforce development), and help small business people get the market research and insight needed to grow (Diamond, 2010, p. 9).

In general, assessing the economic benefits that arise from public library use in the lives of patrons and the cumulative financial impact on the local community is difficult. An assessment of public library evaluation measures found that cost-benefit analysis using circulation statistics combined with market prices may provide a

reasonable approach to assessing economic impact (Matthews, 2004, p. 151). This type of cost-benefit analysis consists of estimating the benefits from library services such as the value of books and materials which would have been purchased had patrons not used the library to borrow those materials as well as estimated costs of services such as Internet sessions, programs and exhibitions, and literacy tutors vs the cost of providing those services (which consists of the library's annual budget) to generate a total return on investment (ROI). This cost-benefit analysis approach was utilized by the Miami-Dade Public Library System in 1999 to roughly quantify the economic benefit of the library to its patrons across all library services (Matthews, 2004, p. 145). However, establishing direct links between library services and economic benefits is always a challenge and the cost for generating usage statistics and conducting surveys is still a costly endeavor.

Other scholars have also dealt with the issue of assessing economic impact of public libraries. Peter Brophy contends that it is easy to demonstrate that libraries have some kind of economic impact via examples, however, it is difficult to concretely measure it (Brophy, 2006, p. 82). Return on investment (ROI) has been highlighted as a key indicator of economic impact especially by government agencies and investment banks. ROI attempts to quantify the amount generated for each unit invested. It is frequently encountered in public sector service-oriented organizations and is considered a useful measure of economic impact (Brophy, 2006, p. 83). Customer preference regarding patron's valuations of services is another method undertaken to examine economic impact. These are also related to concepts of patron use and non-use valuations of library services. Finally, contingent valuation methods (CVM) have been identified as being one of the most common stated-preference methods used for assessing economic

value. It consists of issuing a survey to patrons asking how much they would be willing to pay for something. The main issue with the CVM method is patron willingness to pay for something since people's valuations may be uncertain or their estimations vastly different from what is stated and what is believed (Brophy, 2006, p. 83). However, as a whole these methods of valuation present novel and interesting ways of assessing the economic impact of libraries on their communities. In 2004, the British Library conducted a study using the CVM approach which revealed that "each year the British Library generates value around 4.4 times the level of its public funding" (Brophy, 2006, p. 85). As a result, these methods of measuring economic impact and value in a somewhat concrete manner provide interesting ways of presenting the case that public libraries provide clear economic benefits to their communities which are measurable.

Regarding quality management in public libraries, some scholars have suggested the adoption of generic quality standards such as ISO 9001 in ensuring quality of library programming. ISO 9001 is a quality standard implemented in the business environment which has become increasingly widespread and is slowly being adopted by the public sector. It is a generic standard which can be applied to all types of organizations in all sectors. The standard also offers a useful guide to quality assessment and knowledge management in organizations (Balagué, 2011, p. 27). Program assessments rely heavily on statistical data over the long run, which allows libraries to evaluate whether or not these programs deliver what is expected by users as well as monitor whether or not these programs reach the quality standards established by the library for those respective programs under the ISO standards. Methods for assessing quality management include collecting statistical data, monitoring user actions, using user surveys, conducting user

interviews, getting feedback and self-assessment by staff (Balagué, 2011, p. 155). The key to adopting these types of standards is ensuring constant improvement of quality via evaluation of programs, assessing user satisfaction and assessing whether or not programs meet established goals and standards set forth at program creation (Balagué, 2011, p. 163).

There are various methods for evaluating library programs across a wide variety of libraries. However, there is a relative lack of research regarding the evaluation of workforce development programs in public libraries. The Penn Fels study was one of the first studies of its kind in presenting the economic value of public libraries and economic development as a whole. However, this study was conducted by the School of Government (focusing on public policy issues) of an institution of higher learning rather than by libraries or library-affiliated federal organizations. For libraries to present their case clearly to policymakers, it is necessary for librarians to take ownership of the data which they collect regarding their various programs and directly interact with policymakers regarding program funding. Librarians have the greatest incentives to advocate for their institutions and the benefits of their programs and as a result, they need to be aware of the policy issues and politics regarding funding which affects their effectiveness and roles within their communities. The Penn Fels study is a great step forward in demonstrating the effectiveness of library programs on their communities. However, it is also important to know how librarians can improve the ways that they advocate for their role in their communities in a concrete manner, which may or may not be similar to the approach of the researchers at Penn. Also, it is not clear if libraries currently adopt standards regarding data collection and management, which can affect the

quality of the data that they gather on their workforce development programs. Strong analysis on data of inconsistent quality will still result in biased or unhelpful results. Ensuring that data collection is standardized in order to provide quality data for evaluation is extremely important in assisting libraries in their advocacy efforts.

Rationale

It is crucial to investigate how libraries collect data on their workforce development programs and whether there are existing standards which inform and direct these efforts. Quality data will lead to informative results and help libraries identify areas of strength as well as areas in need of improvement in regards to their existing programs. Understanding how libraries currently implement workforce development initiatives and assess their effectiveness will help to identify areas where the library excels as well as areas which could be improved upon. This will allow libraries to more effectively serve their communities and provide greater economic benefits to their patrons as well as their community in general.

The Question

There are two main issues of interest when assessing workforce development at public libraries. First, what workforce development programs are currently implemented by the Cumberland County Public Library system and how do they evaluate the effectiveness of their programs. Second, identifying which factors have allowed them to be successful in assisting patrons with job search and in positively contributing to their local economy.

Methods

I conducted a case study of the Cumberland County Public Library System, specifically the West Regional Branch Library in Fayetteville, NC. An informational interview was conducted in September of 2015 with the West Regional Branch Manager of the Cumberland County Public Library, who was also the Job and Career Coordinator of the Library. Data from the informational interview was collected by taking notes during the interview session and by further transcribing the notes after the interview. Cumberland County Public Library was selected as an ideal case to investigate because they won the 2012 National Medal for Museum and Library Service for their workforce development initiatives. The Job and Career Coordinator was chosen for the informational interview because he was directly involved with the planning and implementation of workforce development programs in the Cumberland County Public Library System and would be able to provide context regarding key individuals, their roles and their relationships within the area of workforce development at the Library. The informational interview was selected as a data collection method in order to provide a deep and rich analysis of the various program initiatives implemented at the Library and the key individuals involved in workforce development at the Library. I also analyzed 2014-2015 public library data provided by the State Library of North Carolina on workforce development programs at public library systems to provide context as well as to compare the program offerings at various public library systems in North Carolina at a system-wide level.

Results

The Cumberland County Public Library system was selected for this case study because it received recognition for its workforce development efforts. In 2012, The Cumberland County Public Library was awarded the National Medal for Museum and Library Science, “the nation’s highest honor conferred on museums and libraries for service to the community” by the Institute of Museum and Library Science (IMLS), primarily for their efforts in providing workforce development services for their community. Furthermore, the library received the County Commission Economic Effectiveness awards for their collaboration with organizations and for providing services in the area of workforce development. As a result, it was determined that the Cumberland County Public Library would be an ideal case study to investigate the effectiveness of workforce development efforts of public libraries. The results below describe information gathered from an informational interview on September 2015 with the West Regional Branch Manager of the Cumberland County Public Library, who was also the Job and Career Coordinator of the Library.

Area Demographics

Cumberland County in North Carolina has a population of approximately 328,000 people. 89.8 percent of the population consist of high school graduates or higher while approximately 28 percent of the population has a bachelor’s degree or higher. Furthermore, 19.5 percent of the population of Cumberland County are veterans

(approximately 41,000 people) (“Quick Facts: Cumberland County, North Carolina”, 2015). According to the United States Census Bureau in 2014, 53.2 percent of the population were white, 37.6 percent were black or African American, 11 percent were Hispanic or Latino, and 2.7 percent were Asian. Finally, according to the 2014 annual employment figures, the occupations with the largest employment were in healthcare and retail services (“Cumberland County Profile”, 2015).

Library Organization

There are eight library branches and one law library in the Cumberland County Public Library System. The system is composed of one main library (Headquarters Branch), four regional branches (North Regional, West Regional, East Regional and Cliffdale), and three community branches. Each of the community branches are overseen by a regional branch. Each library branch serves and addresses the particular needs of their community. For example, the East Regional branch serves a community of primarily older individuals with children in high school and who are financially more secure than their counterparts in other communities such as in West Regional. As a result, each library branch needs to evaluate the most effective use of their time (the primary cost) and resources. However, even with these diverse communities, the library branches specialize and synergize with each other to support the broader interests of Cumberland County as a whole. For example, the Cumberland County Library System pools a variety of talent to serve various needs. Librarians help with duties such as 21st century job search and North Carolina Career Readiness Certification Training in addition to their traditional duties whereas other individuals are brought into the library to assist with various events and programs such as specialists focusing on resume assistance or human

resource managers to assist with interviewing tips and techniques. Finally, each branch manager has additional responsibilities beyond their branch such as outreach, training coordination, or emerging adult programs.

History and Motivations for Workforce Development Efforts

According to the Job and Career Coordinator, the rise in unemployment across the United States due to the Great Recession led to a new focus on job and career training programs at libraries starting in 2008. As a result, public libraries sought various ways to assist patrons at the local level to deal with these new economic pressures.

At the time, the Cumberland County Public Library System (hereafter referred to as “the Library”) faced the key challenge of knowing the effect of the new workforce development programs that they had implemented. Their solution to this problem was the implementation of job fairs. Job fairs satisfied two major goals. First, library workforce development programs would provide training and skills to people so that they could receive gainful employment with local employers and job fairs would serve to bridge the gap between potential hires and employers. Second, the job fairs would enable the Library to be recognized as an economic booster in the community.

Initially, the Library implemented job fairs with eighteen companies attending the events at the Headquarters Branch. At the time, it was difficult to track the number of people who were hired by companies since there was no concrete evidence or mechanism for doing so. The lack of data made it difficult for library staff to evaluate the effectiveness of their workforce development programs, especially because most companies sent company representatives as opposed to human resources personnel to these job fairs. These representatives did not collect resumes nor were they responsible

for hiring so they had no knowledge of the results of prospective hires from these job fairs. Thus, it was difficult for the library to know if potential company hires came from former library patrons or to know which job fairs these companies were hiring from (that of the Library or that of other organizations in the community). The solution to this tracking problem was the use of stamps to mark resumes that had been completed with the help of Library staff and resources. This allowed the Library to follow-up with human resources personnel at these companies after several weeks to identify the number of people hired who had received Library assistance.

After several job fairs as well as system-wide program development in workforce development, the Library received a grant from the Golden LEAF Foundation of \$6,640 which was subsequently used to invest in mobile laptops. According to their mission statement, Golden LEAF Foundation's mission is to "increase economic opportunity in North Carolina's rural and tobacco-dependent communities through leadership in grantsmaking, collaboration, innovation, and stewardship as an independent and perpetual foundation" ("Golden LEAF: About Us", n.d.). The grants offered by the Foundation focus on development in "agriculture, job creation and retention, and workforce preparedness." Prior to receiving the grant, the Library had a limited number of laptops which were circulated among all eight library branches by courier. This resulted in coordination issues which hampered the Library's ability to offer more workforce development programs to the public since these laptops were critical towards providing effective resources towards these initiatives. After receiving the grant, the Library was able to provide laptops at every branch location, which facilitated a

significant increase in workforce development programs from approximately 100-160 job programs per year to around 600 job programs per year.

Programs and Initiatives

The Library has implemented a wide variety of programs and initiatives aimed at addressing the specific needs of their communities. As of September 2015, the Library offered a total of 169 career programs to the public. A sampling of workforce development initiatives are listed below.

Sample of Workforce Development Initiatives Implemented by the Library

- Internet job cafes
- Fashion shows
- Soft-skill programs
- NC REAL
- FTCC events targeting unemployed, certification programs
- Vocational fairs
- Collaboration with the UNC Gillings School of Public Health
- Collaboration with the Fayetteville Police Department
- Library resource guides

The Library offers a variety of programs that provide services to the public on workforce development issues in a variety of settings and in collaboration with a variety of outside organizations. Internet job cafes allow librarians to conduct classes and interact with individuals interested in learning more about library resources in spaces such as restaurants with the benefit of utilizing library laptops to access and present library resources to the public in a more open setting. The Library offers fashion shows which are programs designed to inform people on what to wear to work and at job fairs. In addition, a variety of soft skill programs are offered to address topics such as being on-time, developing emotional awareness, being a good team member as well as leadership training.

The Library collaborates with NC REAL (Rural Entrepreneurship through Action Learning), which is an organization aimed at developing entrepreneurial talent with a particular focus on rural communities by offering programs that target existing and potential young entrepreneurs (Dabson, n.d.). In addition, the Library works with the Fayetteville Technical Community College (FTCC) to offer free events targeting emerging adults and the unemployed. These programs are generally offered during traditional work hours in order to target the unemployed. After completion of these programs, the FTCC then provides participants with a certificate at the end of the program. The Library also hosts vocational fairs targeted at emerging adults (both college-bound and not-college-bound) in order to address job skills for people in technical tracks such as welding. The FTCC works with local manufacturers such as Goodyear to ensure that their programs in collaboration with the Library prepare students with both technical and soft skills. Vocational fairs are also utilized to connect individuals in technical fields with alternative opportunities such as real estate agents, optometrists, trade apprentices and photographers.

The Library has extensively collaborated with a variety of other organizations in more diverse fields as well. For example, in August 2012, the Library collaborated with the UNC Gillings School of Public Health and hosted a Job and Health Fair to study the health risks associated with unemployment through the Cumberland Community Foundation. The grant offered by the Foundation was split between the Library and with the UNC School of Public Health. People would come to the Library for the job fair while the researchers at UNC would conduct health surveys on-site regarding health habits and providing health recommendations. UNC would then follow-up with the

individuals they had surveyed in order to check whether they had done what was recommended by the UNC health officials to improve their health. The Library benefited by being able to host their job fair while the UNC health officials were able to conduct public health research on individuals who were unemployed or underemployed.

In May 2014, the Fayetteville Police Department conducted a re-entry job fair for ex-convicts. The Library collaborated with the Department of Social Services by providing 40 mobile laptops to an Internet job café and connected with vendors in order to raise awareness of the event. By providing resources to the Police Department in order to assist with their job fair, the Library was able to receive the advocacy of the Police Department on their behalf in order to increase awareness of the Library's workforce development initiatives across the state of North Carolina. This advocacy subsequently allowed the Library to find greater opportunities to collaborate with other partners and organizations such as local charities to provide clothing giveaways, the space to host these events as well as additional resources to the homeless and former convicts.

Finally, the Library provides Library Resource Guides to the public to market their services. The program allows librarians to help lead people, conduct classes and provide class notes to the public. Typically, very little prior training is required for these programs, otherwise, library and career resources training is provided. The guides cover various topics such as search secrets (effective query methods), writing cover letters and insider information. These guides address many issues facing patrons when companies send prospective hires to online resources to complete online application when those patrons may not have the technological literacy to find these resources online. As a result, the library provides free instruction and provides Library Resource Guides to help people

more effectively search for resources, especially those which are located online.

Examples of these resource guides include “Job Leads”, which has a listing of local jobs, “Career Coach”, which is an FTCC resource designed to help people find jobs by providing data on wages, employment, job postings, associated education and training, as well as the “Fayetteville Cumberland County Chamber of Commerce”, which allows people to search the chamber directory to find local businesses (“Job and Career Resources: Career and Training”, n.d.).

Marketing is a central component in promoting the various workforce development programs and initiatives of the Library. Raising awareness of the various services and resources offered by the Library enables them to reach a wider audience on workforce development issues as well as to promote the library’s services as a whole. As we have seen previously, collaboration with other organizations is a key method of raising awareness regarding the Library’s initiatives both within the community and beyond. In addition, brochures are used as marketing tools to provide job resources in booklet form. The marketing department works in tandem with other teams such as the Workforce Development Taskforce to research and print these brochures for the public, with the printed brochures paid for by the Cumberland County Workforce Development Board. The Library also uses various mediums to raise awareness of their programs, from local radio, to online resources such as Facebook and Twitter, as well as the local newspaper. Finally, the Library provides weekly articles for library outreach which highlights Library programs to news agencies such as the Fayetteville Observer.

Funding

Most economic development funding originates from external sources in the form of grants beyond what the library traditionally receives from standard library operations. Workforce development programs are typically funded by grants from sources such as the Friends of the Library or from external sources such as the Golden LEAF Foundation. With funding from external sources such as Golden LEAF, where the library was able to purchase mobile PCs via a grant, there are typically conditions that must be met in order to receive the grant. For example, one of the grant stipulations for the Golden LEAF grant was that at least 80% of the respondents needed to have indicated that Library programs had improved their skills. The Library collected this data through the use of evaluation cards, which were then compiled into Library statistics for reporting purposes. In addition, these evaluation cards were beneficial in that they could be utilized to gather data and recommendations for other areas such as career programming as well as programming targeted to certain groups. However, the Friends of the Library still provides a significant source of grant funding for economic development programs such as job fairs. Most of this funding is invested towards items such as providing free lunches for job fair participants. This is significant as most grant funding serves to fund items that facilitate existing programs rather than fund entirely new programs themselves. For example, funding provided for mobile laptops allows for an expansion of existing initiatives, not the creation of new initiatives altogether. In regards to traditional library resources as opposed to grant funding, the bulk of those funds are directed towards staff. For example, while the West Regional Branch has an approximately \$11 million budget, approximately \$8 million of those funds are directed towards staffing. What was

significant during my interview was that the Career Coordinator noted that the single most important factor in determining the feasibility of programs was the cost of library staff *time* and flexibility to work at job fairs. Therefore, while the majority of economic development funding comes from grants, the most valuable resource is not the grant funding itself but the staff and their time to work on these workforce development initiatives.

People and Training

As we have seen, people are an important element towards determining the success of workforce development programs. While we have seen examples of collaboration and staff time in determining economic development program success, there are other factors which also play an important role, such as direct involvement between librarians and policymakers as well as training programs for staff and patrons.

In regards to libraries and policymaking, the Library Director at the West Regional Branch is the only Director who sits on the Cumberland Workforce Development Board. This places the Library Director in direct contact with policymakers and with economic development issues facing the county as a whole. Due to the Library's direct participation in the policymaking issues regarding economic development, the Library has become a part of a larger economic initiative as a whole in regards to the wider community.

Training both staff as well as other departments and patrons is a key element in investing in people. The Library works with other organizations in the county to provide training services to members of external departments and agencies such as providing Excel classes for county employees. In regards to staff training, the library provides

extensive opportunities for training and growth. Librarians can take a variety of courses to improve their skills in diverse areas such as reviewing resumes, using proprietary databases as well as additional databases such as NC LIVE (online library resources), and ReferenceUSA databases. Finally, the library offers extensive programs for patrons to build skills and to engage in continuous learning. The Library provides job search boot camps which provide resume and interview tips as well as 21st century job searching strategies. The Library also provides instruction on navigating NC Works which is an online resource for job seekers and employers in North Carolina (“NC Works Online”, n.d.). Finally, the Library offers a “Book-a-Librarian” program which provides 45 minutes of individual instruction for any person twice a month on any topic. The program is directed towards emerging adults and provides individualized instruction on a range of topics such as starting a blog or using Excel. The “Book-a-Librarian” program is a way for the library to meet the needs of patrons regarding any topic of interest and pairs them with a librarian who can provide appropriate instruction on that topic.

Research and Reporting

Collecting and analyzing data for workforce development programs is extremely important for the Library as the data is used for conducting internal research as well as for reporting to state agencies. For example, program attendance numbers are reported to state agencies due to state mandates for their library statistics.

The Library uses a variety of methods to collect and store data on their various programs. For example, the Library uses Evanced calendar programming to track and report attendance numbers for their programs. Evanced Solutions operates as a subsidiary company of Demco, Inc. which “helps libraries manage spaces, reading programs and

events” and offers event calendar management tools tailored to the particular needs of libraries (“Evanced: Products”, n.d.). The Library can run reports on their calendar software for job and career programs and generate attendance numbers. Reports can be run on individual programs or aggregated for all workforce development programs. When reports are sent to state agencies, the Library provides reports on their data at the system-wide level rather than on individual branches.

At large events such as job fairs, the Library stations librarians at various entrances and provides them with clicker counters to track the number of people attending the job fair. Librarians also hand out exit surveys to people leaving the job fairs to collect data on user satisfaction as well as comments regarding areas of improvement. As we have seen with the reporting for the Golden LEAF Foundation, these exit surveys are very important in determining the effectiveness of programs and for determining whether the Library has been meeting requirements and conditions when offered grants from organizations.

When conducting research, the Library makes use of various databases such as NC LIVE to collect data on employment trends and the state of the local economy. NC LIVE “offers free electronic access to resources for all ages on topics ranging from careers, business, and investing, to health, history, and genealogy” (“NC LIVE: About”, n.d.). Some of the databases useful in reporting economic data include ACCESSNC, Business Link North Carolina, Job Openings, and ReferenceUSA. The Library can run reports on the data provided in these databases to conduct research in addition to their existing event management software.

The Library has also established a Workforce Development Taskforce that conducts research on workforce development services. For example, at the West Regional Branch Library, the taskforce is comprised of fifteen people ranging from librarians to graphic designers who list goals and conduct research based on a five-year plan. The taskforce determines program feasibility and costs, specific hardware requirements, scholarships as well as the availability of similar programs at other libraries and academic institutions (notably community colleges). Once the taskforce generates a report on proposed program initiatives, program feasibility and final recommendations, the Job and Career Coordinator reviews the report and makes a final decision.

Job fairs

Job fairs are some of the Library's largest workforce development events, bringing together around one thousand potential job seekers with approximately forty companies. They play a critical role in the Library's efforts to connect businesses with job seekers and serve to address multiple goals such as collecting data on the overall effects of workforce development initiatives as well as promoting collaboration between the Library, businesses, organizations and state agencies. As job fairs are large events, the Library typically maintains a staff of around thirty to forty individuals to assist with concurrent programs as well as with additional duties such as data collection, assisting patrons at computer terminals and resume-building at these events. According to the Job and Career Coordinator, since 2010, the Library has connected over 7000 people to employers and nearly 550 people have been hired via library programs.

Collaboration with other businesses and agencies is an integral part in successfully implementing job fairs. The Library collaborates with the Department of

Social Services for help in getting companies to come to the library for their job fairs. In turn, the Library reciprocates by providing assistance and resources for the Department of Social Services with their own job fairs and events. In addition, the Library works towards recruiting more businesses and vendors to their job fairs in order to increase exposure as well as to connect people to a greater range of businesses. Successful recruitment of vendors results in building more relationships with businesses as well as an increase in valuable information. In order to facilitate these relationships and track vendors, the Job and Career Coordinator tracks nearly every business in Cumberland County and whether the Library has contacted them for recruitment for Library job fairs. The Career Coordinator maintains extensive information on these vendors which include contact information, industry, and willingness to participate.

Job fairs are excellent sources for collecting data on the effectiveness of library programs and initiatives. Notably, attendance numbers as well as the results from exit surveys help to provide useful feedback on workforce development programs. Attendance numbers indicate the types of programs that are in high demand by the public while exit surveys serve to help the Library identify areas of success and areas in need of further improvement. Furthermore, by tracking the resumes that library patrons complete via library programs by using special identifying stamps, the Library is able to collect information on patron employment results with the companies attending the job fair. For example, the Library has a team that calls employers several weeks after the job fair for follow-ups and determines how many people were hired from the Library's job fair by asking human resources departments at these companies to count the resumes which were

submitted by individuals who were eventually hired by the company and were completed using Library services (by looking at those resumes with the Library's stamp).

Other Library Systems

It is instructive to analyze public library statistics on workforce development programs initiated at other library systems. For this comparison, it was decided to compare library systems which served similar legal service population areas. According to the Public Library Statistical Report "Instructions and Data Definitions" published by the State Library of North Carolina for the period between July 2014 through June 2015, the legal service population area is defined as "the number of people in the geographic area for which a public library has been established to offer services and from which (or on behalf of which) the library derives income, plus any areas served under contract for which the library is the primary service provider" ("NC Public Library Statistical Report: Instructions and Data Definitions", 2015). It was believed that comparing library systems with similar legal service populations would offer the best basis for comparison as the size of a library system would be less likely to skew the initial interpretation when comparing raw data regarding library program offerings (for example, comparing the number of programs at large library systems with smaller library systems might make it appear as though the larger library system does more for its community based on the number of programs alone). The following table was based on the "Table 1: Library Profile" dataset provided by the State Library of North Carolina in their 2014-2015 Statistical Report of North Carolina Libraries. The names of the library systems have been replaced with aliases for the purposes of this paper (Library System #1 and Library System #2 respectively).

Table 1

	NC Dept. of Commerce tier designation (2015)	Legal service population area	Service outlets				Annual hours
			Central	Branches	Bookmobiles	Other mobile units	
			Central	Branches	Bookmobiles	Mobile units	
County Libraries							
Cumberland	2	332,553	1	8	0	1	30,108
Library System #1	3	282,763	1	6	0	2	18,085
Library System #2	3	360,463	1	11	2	4	31,090

(From “Table 1-Library Profile”, 2014-2015 Draft Statistical Report of North Carolina Public Libraries)

The NC Department of Commerce tier designation is a classification on economic well-being which is assigned to each county by the NC Department of Commerce. According to the NC Department of Commerce, they “annually rank the state’s 100 counties based on economic well-being and assign each a Tier designation. The 40 most distressed counties are designated as Tier 1, the next 40 as Tier 2 and the 20 least distressed as Tier 3. This Tier system is incorporated into various state programs to encourage economic activity in the less prosperous areas of the state.” (“2016 County Tier Designations”, 2015). Furthermore, the tier designations are based on four key factors: “average unemployment rate, median household income, percentage growth in population, and adjusted property tax base per capita.” This economic tier designation serves as a useful indicator in assisting with comparisons of library systems because it provides additional context for workforce development programs implemented in various counties (since in theory, economically distressed counties are more likely to need a broader range of workforce development programs than those which are less economically distressed).

From “Table 1 - Library Profile” we can see that the three library systems have similar legal service populations of approximately 325,000 on average. Furthermore, we see that Cumberland County has a Tier 2 designation whereas Library Systems #1 and #2 have Tier 3 designations. Finally, Library System #2 is the largest library system in our comparison based on the number of branches (11 branches).

The following tables show the number of programs as well as program attendance between these three library systems. Categories labeled as “Technology/Computers” and “Workforce Development” have been highlighted. The tables are based on the dataset “Table 12 - Library Programs, Attendance, and Meeting Space” provided by the State Library of North Carolina in their 2014-2015 Statistical Report of North Carolina Libraries. Again, the names of the additional library systems have been replaced with aliases for the purposes of this paper.

Table 2A

	Number of Programs					
	Adult	Young Adult	Children	Technology/Computers	Workforce Development	Total
County Libraries						
Cumberland	792	580	2,607	213	157	3,979
Library System #1	1,754	1,579	3,868	356	3	7,201
Library System #2	1,003	243	2,014	2,705	710	3,260

(From “Table 12- Library Programs, Attendance, and Meeting Space”, 2014-2015 Draft Statistical Report of North Carolina Public Libraries)

Table 2B

	Program attendance							Meeting Rooms	
		Young		Technology/	Workforce		Attendance		
	Adult	Adult	Children	Computers	Development	Total	Per Capita	Use	Attendance
County Libraries									
Cumberland	12,422	12,556	75,265	1,005	4,298	100,243	0.30	10,600	64,499
Library System #1	19,355	10,934	127,338	711	22	157,627	0.56	12,228	52,187
Library System #2	12,584	2,049	64,132	48,721	3,360	78,765	0.22	3,604	45,179

(From “Table 12- Library Programs, Attendance, and Meeting Space”, 2014-2015 Draft Statistical Report of North Carolina Public Libraries)

The data in Table 2A indicates that Cumberland County has a fairly balanced number of programs across various categories relative to the other two library systems with no noticeably extreme values. Library System #1 has the greatest number of children’s programs offered out of the three library systems (3,868 programs). Finally, Library System #2 has the largest numbers of programs in technology and workforce development out of the three library systems (2,705 technology and 710 workforce development).

Table 2B shows that Cumberland County has the highest program attendance for young adult programs and workforce development programs out of the three systems (12,556 for young adult and 4,298 for workforce development). Library System #1 has the highest program attendance for adult programs (19,355) and children’s programs (127,338). Finally, Library System #2 has the highest program attendance numbers for technology programs (48,721).

Discussion

There are a multitude of programs and services which the Cumberland County Public Library system implements that serve to distinguish their workforce development programs from other library systems. However, there are several key themes that arise from the data which may reflect why the Library is so unique in their approach to workforce development. These themes consist of the central importance of people, data-driven research and innovation, the role of funding as a means to support existing programs and the central importance of job fairs as a workforce development initiative.

People

People (specifically library staff) are the central element that account for the success of the workforce development programs implemented by the Library. From interacting with policymakers on economic policy to collaboration with state agencies and from advocacy of programs to the importance of staff time, people are crucial for the library to develop their workforce development programs and to ensure their success.

In regards to interactions with policymakers, the Library Director at the West Regional Branch is the only Director who sits on the Cumberland Workforce Development Board. This is important for the Library because it allows the Library to interact directly with policymakers on economic issues facing the county as a whole. As a result, the Library is provided with unique insights and is placed as a key insider on the economic issues facing the county as a whole while establishing the Library's importance in promoting many of the economic development initiatives proposed via public policy

for the benefit of the community. This insider status ultimately allows the Library to have key information on economic development issues at a broader governmental and policymaking level while also allowing the Library to take an active role in ensuring that economic development efforts are successful. Additionally, this insider status allows the Library to provide policymakers with increased awareness of the Library's initiatives and how they can serve to facilitate state agencies with their own initiatives.

Another example that highlights the importance of people is the role of collaboration between the Library and other organizations across the state. For example, the Library has collaborated with the UNC Gillings School of Public Health on job fairs. This has served multiple goals in that the Library was able to host their job fair while UNC researchers were able to conduct health surveys and research targeted to large numbers of unemployed and underemployed people. Another example is when the Library collaborates with state agencies such as the Fayetteville Police Department and the Department of Social Services to assist with their re-entry job fairs for ex-convicts by providing library resources. Both of these examples highlight two key benefits of collaboration with other organizations. First, these collaborative efforts help to enhance the effectiveness of program initiatives such as receiving grant funding for working with the UNC Gillings School of Public Health and for accomplishing multiple goals at a single event (job fair initiatives and health research) or for enhancing job fairs hosted by the Police Department by providing much-needed resources at their event. Second, these collaborative efforts help to market the Library's workforce development initiatives throughout the state by raising awareness of the Library's offerings and by increasing the number of advocates for the Library. Instead of the Library relying entirely on their

outreach programs to advocate for Library programs as a whole (traditional library programs as well as workforce development programs), the Library can foster close ties with other organizations such as state agencies, academic institutions, and businesses who will advocate on behalf of the programs and initiatives of the Library. This results in a positive feedback effect in which collaboration allows for the Library to spread awareness of their initiatives to other institutions that results in more grant funding as well as greater opportunities to interact with more organizations throughout the state to expand their program offerings further.

Finally, the Library's investment in their staff is the final example which highlights the crucial role that people play in developing and executing effective workforce development programs. The Library provides staff training in areas such as reviewing resumes or using proprietary databases. As a result, the Library ensures that their staff have the resources and skills to be more effective when implementing various library programs such as leading classes on workforce development topics such as using spreadsheet software or navigating business and jobs databases or when creating Library Resource Guides for the public. Also, we have seen from the interview with the Job and Career Coordinator that the most significant factor in determining the feasibility of programs was the cost of library staff time and their flexibility in working at various times for a variety of events. It is significant that the Career Coordinator specifically identified staff time as the single most important factor determining the feasibility of their programs as opposed to other aspects such as funding or library spaces. However, while these other aspects are important, they do not have the same impact on library programs as the library staff who provide training, collect data, conduct research and connect

individuals to the resources they need in workforce development initiatives. In fact, it is more important that the Library maintain staff who are available to work at these events and are willing to invest their time and effort towards these programs for them to be successful. As a result, having staff who are skilled as well as flexible and invested in the workforce development programs they are implementing is a critical element in developing effective programs.

Data and Innovation

The next major theme concerns the role of data-driven research and innovation in developing new economic program proposals and for collecting data on these programs to further improve existing initiatives. The Library develops effective programs by establishing accurate means for gathering data as well as mobilizing the right people to conduct research on new proposals.

The first example which exemplifies the role of data-driven research for workforce development at the Library is the Workforce Development Taskforce. The Workforce Development Taskforce conducts research on workforce development proposals based on a five-year plan and determines program feasibility and costs, hardware requirements and compares the proposed programs with similar offerings across the county in other libraries and community colleges. The taskforce is unique in that it brings together a group of people with the specific goal of preparing program recommendations by analyzing data collected by the Library on existing workforce development programs offered by the Library such as at job fairs and feedback from exit surveys and compares that data with research on overall economic trends in the county with initiatives currently offered by other organizations for similar services. The

taskforce focuses the efforts of librarians on the specific task of investigating workforce development programs and provides the taskforce with the responsibility of developing recommendations for new programs based on data-driven research. This level of responsibility for the taskforce serves to foster staff investment on the issues of workforce development and allows them to develop the expertise to conduct research on nontraditional library initiatives in economic development.

The next example concerns the role of innovation driven by the need to collect accurate data on workforce development programs. The Library uses a variety of methods to collect data on economic initiatives at the Library from collecting program attendance numbers to analyzing feedback and recommendations from exit surveys. However, the Library faced the challenge of collecting data on patron employment from Library programs such as job fairs, which made it difficult to assess the effectiveness of their programs. For example, if patrons made extensive use of Library programs and resources in order to be hired by local companies and yet failed to receive gainful employment even with the support of Library resources, this would indicate that the Library was not effectively addressing the needs of patrons on the issue of job recruitment. However, the Library developed an elegant solution to a complex problem by making use of stamps. When patrons completed resumes with the help of Library resources, the Library would provide a stamp indicating that the resume was completed with assistance from the Cumberland County Public Library system. Several weeks after a job fair, librarians would periodically call the human resources departments of vendors who had attended the job fair for employment updates. Librarians would ask human resources personnel to count the number of resumes of successful applicants which had

this unique stamp. This provided the Library with an accurate method of calculating how many of their patrons were able to receive gainful employment from their programs. This is important because it provides the Library with an indicator of program effectiveness (hiring rate of patrons from Library programs) as well as data on the types of businesses that are hiring from Library programs. This is incredibly important as it provides a gauge of industry as well as employer demand for labor, allowing the Library to tailor their programs to suit the needs of their patrons to better assist them in the job search process in light of broader economic trends.

The Role of Funding

The final major theme is the role of funding in workforce development programs. We have seen examples of the impact of funding such as the Golden LEAF grants which helped facilitate the purchase of additional mobile laptops for workforce development efforts. Funding allows the Library to expand and enhance their existing programs by providing resources. However, major funding for workforce development programs come from grants and are typically used to support existing programs as opposed to creating entirely new programs. In fact, we have seen that the key limiting factor for workforce development programs is not necessarily the amount of funding, but the amount of staff time and staff flexibility to assist in a variety of workforce development programs. Funding alone cannot explain the Cumberland County Public Library system's effectiveness in workforce development. In fact, funding plays a secondary role of supporting existing library programs as opposed to the role of human factors such as collaboration with individuals at state agencies and external organizations, creativity and innovation, staff time and flexibility, as well as the personal investment of staff members

on workforce development issues through their involvement in programs and their willingness to improve Library offerings via research.

Job fairs

Job fairs deserve special mention because they exemplify all of the factors that make Cumberland County Public Library's approach to workforce development unique and effective. Job fairs are ultimately about bringing people together and connecting people to the resources they need. Librarians recruit businesses to attend these job fairs for potential new hires. The Library collaborates with state agencies such as the Department of Social Services or academic institutions to facilitate job fair proceedings and to satisfy diverse objectives. In addition, the Library employs a large number of staff members at the event to address multiple needs from data collection to assisting patrons on-site with their resumes and use of library computers.

Job fairs also exemplify the role of data-driven research and innovation in data collection. The efforts of the Workforce Development Taskforce in researching workforce development programs allows the Library to offer economic programming which addresses the job search needs of patrons. These programs and resources provide patrons with the skills and the resources needed to prepare them for events such as job fairs and beyond. The efforts of the Taskforce culminate in preparing job seekers to meet and interact with businesses at job fairs and to present themselves in the best possible light at these events. In addition, the job fairs are ideal for collecting data to analyze the Library's program offerings and to determine areas for improvement. Librarians collect data on job fair attendance using clicker counters and hand out exit surveys to receive feedback from patrons on whether the event was helpful and what could be improved

upon. Finally, the Library can collect hiring data from these job fairs by contacting human resources personnel at the companies which attended the job fair and identify successful hires based on resumes with the Library's unique stamp. The job fairs offer an ideal location to gather employment data and to tailor existing and proposed economic programming to better suit the needs of the Library community.

Finally, job fairs highlight the role of funding as a means of enhancing and supporting existing programs. Grant funding from the Friends of the Library allows the Library to provide meals to job fair attendees. On the other hand, grant funding from organizations such as the Golden LEAF Foundation help to fund the computer terminals that are used at job fairs which allow patrons to conduct research and to prepare their resumes. Finally, grant funding allows the Library to produce printed material such as brochures which advertise library programs as well as printed Library Resource Guides which patrons can use for reference on topics such as jobs and careers as well as entrepreneurship.

Comparisons with Other Library Systems

The public library data provided by the State Library of North Carolina provides a useful means of comparing program offerings among different library systems. As we have seen, Cumberland County has a Tier 2 designation while the other two library systems in our comparison have Tier 3 designations. This reflects the fact that Cumberland County is considered to be more economically distressed than the counties for Library System #1 and Library System #2. As a result, we would expect Cumberland County to focus on workforce development programs more than other library systems in less economically distressed regions.

In regards to the number of programs, Cumberland County appears to have a good balance between traditional library program offerings such as adult and children's programs as well as technology and workforce development programs. Library System #1 appears to be more focused on traditional library programs and does not have as many programs in workforce development (3 as opposed to 157 for Cumberland). On the other hand, Library System #2 appears to have a very large emphasis on technology and workforce development programs relative to the other two library systems. This is interesting since based on the economic tier designation (Tier 3), one would expect Library System #2 to have a similar number of programs to Library System #1 as opposed to that of library systems in more economically distressed areas such as Cumberland County (Tier 2). However, several points need to be addressed before reaching a conclusion on the program offerings of Library System #2 relative to that of Cumberland County. First, it should be noted that the total number of programs is not simply a summation of the programs listed in the table. For example, the total number of programs based on a summation of programs for each library system should correspond to 4,349 for Cumberland, 7,560 for Library System #1, and 6,675 for Library System #2, which does not match the results in the tables (3,979 for Cumberland, 7,201 for Library System #1, and 3,260 for Library System #2). Thus, it is believed that the library programs have multiple program topical categories, which would result in programs being accounted for multiple times in the table results (in other words, the program numbers can reflect programs with multiple categories and does not restrict programs to a single category). Also, Library System #2 developed a program called "Survive & Thrive @ the Library" which would consolidate the various programs and initiatives aimed at

job seekers into a single program in 2010 (“Survive & Thrive @ the Library”, n.d.).

Library System #2 decided to expand their program offerings to meet the unique needs of their community while “no longer offering basic job seeking information and resources” which were already being provided by community agencies (“Survive & Thrive @ the Library”, n.d.). By consolidating both job seeking and economic help programs into the Survive & Thrive program, Library System #2 was able to offer traditional workforce development programs such as re-inventing people for the modern job market, job networking and resume critiques in tandem with programs such as SAT/ACT Test strategies, college study skills, mutual fund basics, budgeting basics, social security disability, Medicare, and saving for retirement. It should be noted that Library System #2 has a Tier 3 designation for economic prosperity which would indicate that the needs of patrons within a Tier 3 designated county are very different from the needs of a Tier 2 (more economically distressed) designated county such as Cumberland County. Thus, Library System #2 has expanded their economic program offerings to address the specific needs of their community and this may impact the number of workforce development programs reported to the State Library of North Carolina. This may also explain the discrepancy between the number of workforce development programs offered by Library System #2 relative to the number of program attendees for workforce development. Based solely on the statistics reported by the State Library of North Carolina, Cumberland County had the highest ratio of workforce development program attendance to the number workforce development programs out of the three library systems in our comparison in 2015 (approximately 27 people per workforce development program in Cumberland County, 7 people per program in Library System #1 and 5 people per

program in Library System #2). These factors may explain why Library System #2 has such high numbers for technology and workforce development programs relative to the other library systems in our comparison.

Looking at Table 2B for program attendance figures, we see attendance numbers which may reflect the direction of patron demand for library services in their respective library systems. Cumberland County has the highest attendance numbers for their workforce development programs relative to the other library systems (4,298 people). Library System #1 appears to focus on their children's programs (127,338 people). Finally, Library System #2 appears to focus on children's programs and technology programs (64,132 for children and 48,721 for technology programs). This provides a useful indicator as to which program offerings are in greatest demand by patrons for their respective county library systems as well as the type of programs that these library systems would be inclined to develop further. In regards to workforce development, the program attendance figures would imply that there is greater patron demand for workforce development programs in more economically distressed areas (Tier 2 versus Tier 3 designations) as Cumberland County had the highest program attendance figures (4,298 people) for their workforce development programs out of the 3 library systems in our comparison.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the principal findings from the case study analysis were that the most important element in determining the success of workforce development programs in public libraries was the effort and initiative of library personnel, that in-depth research and innovative approaches to data collection are crucial for successful program creation and evaluation, that funding plays an important but secondary role in supporting and enabling workforce development programs, and that job fairs are key workforce development initiatives that provide ideal spaces which bring together job seekers, businesses, and resources together while offering an ideal means of collecting valuable data on the effectiveness of workforce development programs. The findings indicate that public libraries should focus on providing library personnel with resources to facilitate their ability to actively contribute to workforce development initiatives. By providing library personnel with resources to build skills that they can pass on to others in classes and resource guides, to collect data and conduct research on economic development programs, as well as to collaborate with other departments and organizations, public libraries can develop a library workforce that is effective in implementing and evaluating workforce development programs while also building personal investment in staff members to ensure program success. Ensuring that staff members are personally invested in the workforce development efforts of the library is extremely important for public libraries to ensure the long-term growth and sustainability of these programs.

Further research on workforce development programs in public libraries would benefit from additional interviews with library personnel. For example, interviewing library personnel on data collection and research would provide additional context regarding the actual implementation of library economic programs. These interviews would also highlight the issues faced by staff regarding implementation and their views on their role in the broader efforts of the library as a whole on workforce development. In addition, interviews with career coordinators at other library systems would provide a great deal of context regarding the workforce development data reported to the state and would help address the efforts and needs of public libraries which may not have the resources or staff to implement robust workforce development programs. Finally, direct observation of job fairs would provide a first-hand account of job fair implementation and could potentially highlight additional factors and efforts which may be overlooked by library personnel or which may not be discussed directly in the interview. Direct observation of job fairs would also provide a useful means of analyzing the interactions and needs of library patrons and businesses attending the job fair. This would provide valuable information on the needs of stakeholders other than the public library, which may help to inform the researcher on additional elements central to library effectiveness in workforce development.

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Appendix A

Interview Questionnaire Survey

1. Please describe your library and community in general (demographics, special needs, etc.).
2. Which programs are tailored for certain groups of people in the community?
3. What kind of relationship does the library have with other organizations in the community? Collaboration?
4. What workforce development programs do you currently have to help your community?
5. How do you track the progress of your patrons after their use of library services/events?
6. How do you measure program success (program evaluation measures)?
7. How does the library collect, store and organize its data on workforce development programs?
8. What is the history of your workforce development initiatives?
9. Are workforce development programs implemented due to funding mandates or organically by library staff?
10. Who is involved in creating and organizing workforce development initiatives?
11. Are there particular places or spaces where the library conducts workforce development programs?
12. How does the library receive funding for its workforce development programs?
13. How much impact does funding have on the number, types and breadth of programs you offer?
14. Are there any obstacles for implementing certain workforce development programs? If yes, could you describe these obstacles for the library?